

Abstract

An apparatus and method for stiffening an wet extruded ceramic body for improved handling prior to drying and firing. The ceramic body is formed from a plastically deformable material including inorganic raw materials, and organics, such as a binder having a thermal gel point. As the ceramic body log exits the extruder die it is passed through a microwave energy field to be heated to above the gelling point of the organic binder. The ceramic body then stiffens and can be easily handled without deformation.